

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions of the claims in this application:

1. (Currently amended) A processor-implemented document display system, comprising:
 - means for extracting a relationship between a plurality of documents in a group of documents; and
 - virtual document generation means for:
 - selecting the relationship, the group of documents associated with the relationship, and an expansion condition for each document of the group of documents;
 - forming a section group that includes the group of documents selected according to the relationship;
 - generating a virtual document from the group of documents;
 - identifying an association between the documents in a thread in the virtual document, as a tree structure; and
 - selectively realizing the expansion condition of the thread in the virtual document, based on the tree structure, ~~regardless of the content of the virtual document.~~
2. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 1, wherein the virtual document generation means forms the section group by embedding a document header and a level indicating a depth of hierarchy from a main document.
3. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 1, wherein the related information storage means stores information of a parent document related to a document read from the document storage means.

Claims 4-20 (Canceled)

21. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 1, wherein the extracted relationship comprises a hierarchical relationship.

22. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 1, wherein the extracted relationship comprises a thread; and wherein the group of documents form a message.

23. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 22, further comprising an expansion condition storage unit for storing an expansion condition of the message, wherein the virtual document generation unit generates a section by fetching an expansion condition of the message from the expansion condition storage unit.

24. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 23, further comprising a user interactive processing unit for accepting an expansion request to a header from a user, wherein the virtual document generation unit is used to add the message to the virtual document on the basis of the expansion request accepted by the user interactive processing unit.

25. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 23, wherein the documents in the messages comprise a collection of documents that are unscheduled for editing.

26. (Currently amended) A processor-implemented document display method, comprising:

extracting a relationship between a plurality of documents in a group of documents;

selecting the relationship, the group of documents associated with the relationship, and an expansion condition for each document of the group of documents;

forming a section group that includes the group of documents selected according to the relationship;
generating a virtual document from the group of documents;
identifying an association between the documents in a thread in the virtual document, as a tree structure; and
selectively realizing the expansion condition of the thread in the virtual document, based on the tree structure, ~~regardless of the content of the virtual document.~~

27. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 26, wherein forming the section group comprises embedding a document header and a level indicating a depth of hierarchy from a main document.

28. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 26, wherein storing the relationship comprises storing information of a parent document related to a document read from the group of documents.

29. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 26, wherein the extracted relationship comprises a hierarchical relationship.

30. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 26, wherein the extracted relationship comprises a thread; and wherein the group of documents form a message.

31. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 30, further comprising storing an expansion condition of the message; and wherein generating the virtual document comprises generating a section by fetching an expansion condition of the message.

32. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 31, further comprising accepting an expansion request to a header from a user; and

adding the message to the virtual document on the basis of the accepted expansion request.

33. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 31, wherein the documents in the messages comprise a collection of documents that are unscheduled for editing.

Claims 34-37 cancelled.

38. (New) A processor-implemented document display method, comprising:

mapping a plurality of documents into a virtual document;
organizing one or more thread expansion buttons and one or more content expansion buttons into a tree structure;
displaying, in the virtual document, the one or more thread expansion buttons that, when selected, a thread containing the plurality of documents, is expanded without document content being expanded; and
displaying, in the virtual document, the one or more content expansion buttons that, when selected, document content is expanded.

39. (New) The method according to claim 38, wherein each thread expansion button has a first state and a second state, the first state being displayed when one or more threads have been omitted from display, the second state being displayed when all threads are expanded in the display.

40. (New) The method according to claim 38, wherein each content expansion button has a third state and a fourth state, the third state being displayed when document content has been omitted from display, the fourth state being displayed when document content is expanded in the display.

REMARKS

Claims 1-3 and 21-37 of the patent application were presented for examination. In the Office Action of April 18, 2007, claims 1-3 and 21-37 were rejected. The claims, as amended, are listed above. Claims 4-20 and 34-37 have been cancelled. New claims 38-40 have been added. The new claims introduce no new matter. Accordingly, claims 1-3, 21-36, and 38-40 are now pending for examination.

At the request of the examiner, a copy of the Japanese translation of the parent application is attached.

Applicant responds to the Office Action as follows:

I. Claim Rejections Under 35 USC § 112

On page 2 of the Office Action, claims 1-3 and 21-37 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. Specifically, the Examiner was unable to find support in the specification for the phrase “regardless of the content of the virtual document.” In response, Applicant has removed the phrase since the claims as recited herein are patentable without the limitation.

II. Claim Rejections Under 35 USC § 103

On page 3 of the Office Action, claims 1-3 and 21-37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over US Application Publication No.